

A Biographical Dictionary of Architects in Maine



William Adams Delano

Delano and Aldrich

Few American architectural firms attained a prominence comparable to that of Delano and Aldrich, and even fewer were as well prepared to assume the privileged role they did. Together they achieved a level of professional success whose standard had been set by McKim, Mead, and White, who provided the aesthetic and social role model for the generation of American architects who began their careers at the turn of the twentieth century. During this period, Delano and Aldrich established a reputation for being among New York City's leading designers of residential and public buildings. Their personal backgrounds and training were remarkably parallel, and that their professional careers should be linked had a nearly inevitable fitness.



Chester Holmes Aldrich

Chester Holmes Aldrich (1871-1940) was born in Providence into an old Rhode Island family. After graduation from Columbia University in 1893, he continued his studies at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology before entering the office of Thomas Mervin Carrere (1858-1911) and Thomas Hastings (1860-1929). He remained there a year, and in 1898 he left for Paris to study at the prestigious Ecole des Beaux-Arts, where the firm's principals had also been trained. Receiving his *diplome* in 1900, he returned to New York to resume his position in the office of his mentors.

William Adams Delano (1874-1960) was born in New York City, and while still young, his family moved to the Philadelphia Main Line suburb of Bryn



Figure 1. Jesup Memorial Library, Bar Harbor, circa 1911 view (MHPC).

Mawr, where he grew up. Educated at the elite Lawrenceville School in New Jersey, by the time he was in his teens, he had decided to pursue a career as an architect. After he was graduated from Yale in 1895, he studied architecture at Columbia for two years before entering the office of Carrere and Hastings. The firm was then engaged in the competition for the New York Public Library, and it was in their studio that he met Aldrich. Hastings encouraged Delano to study in Paris, as did Aldrich. Delano took his advice and trained for five years at the *Ecole*, receiving his *diplome* in 1902.

When he returned to New York in November, 1903, Delano established a partnership with Aldrich, an alliance they had planned while still draughtsmen with Carrere and Hastings. From the start their work exhibits their deep respect for tradition and historical precedent, a sensibility with which both partners had been imbued in Paris. Basing their office in New York City, the work of the firm remained concentrated in the metropolitan region; and for the next quarter century, they undertook prestigious public and private commissions. Especially skilled in producing dignified domestic designs perfectly suited to the taste of New York's social elite, their patrons included mem-

bers of the Rockefeller, Vanderbilt, Whitney, Kahn, Burden, and Astor families.¹ By having a small office, they were able to both maintain a high level of quality and to pay close personal attention to the individual needs of their patrons, who thoroughly appreciated these urbane and cultured gentlemen architects.

The partners' training and social connections were impeccable, but theirs was an unconventional collaboration, and Delano recollected their typical office practice: "Aldrich designed the jobs he brought in, and I designed the jobs I brought in. It was a wonderfully happy partnership."² Aldrich, who had many interests outside architecture, remained a private individual, and it was the more outgoing "Billy" Delano who assumed responsibility for the firm's public role.

The Maine work of Delano and Aldrich comprises three projects spanning the nineteen years between 1910 and 1929, the era of the firm's greatest productivity, a public library, an addition to an existing house, and a new summer residence. Their commissions in this state typify their working practice and style during this period, and significantly, women played prominent patronage roles in all three.

Their first known Maine commission was a public one, the Jesup Memorial Library in Bar Harbor, design-

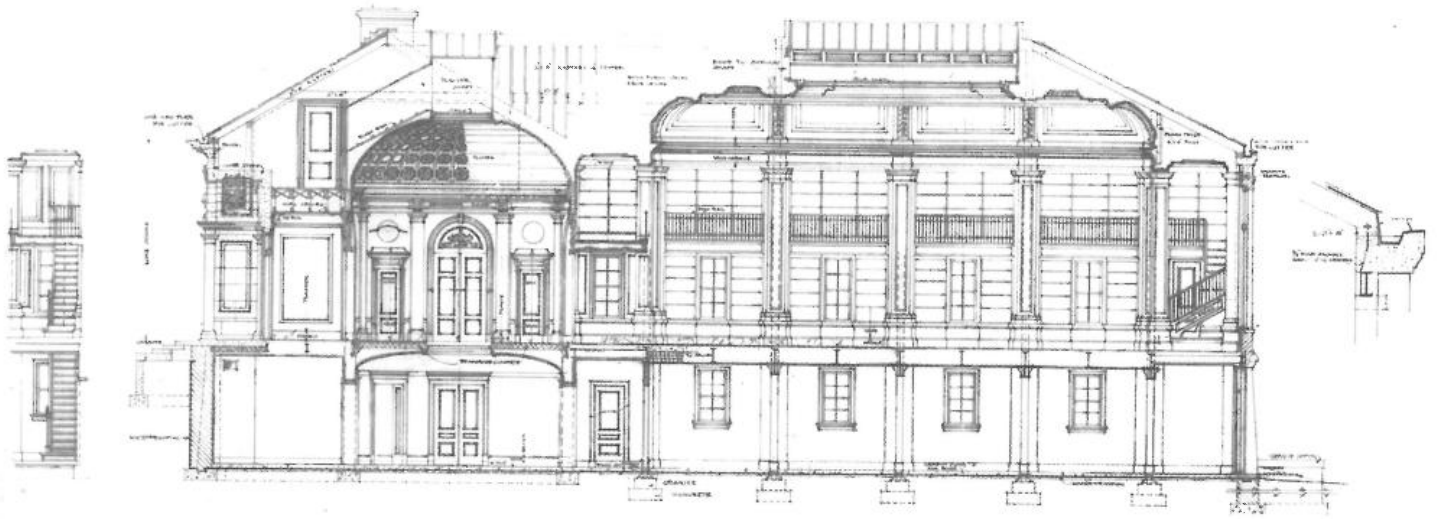


Figure 2. Cross section drawing of the Jesup Memorial Library, Bar Harbor, 1910 (Courtesy of Jesup Memorial Library).

ed in 1910-11 (Figure 1). The structure was named for Morris Ketchum Jesup (1830-1908), a wealthy philanthropist who had summered for many years in that popular resort. A self-made businessman, the large fortune he had amassed enabled him to retire in 1884 at the age of fifty-four. For the next three decades, he devoted himself to a wide range of public philanthropic enterprises, and his civic interests embraced the fields of science, education, and religion.

Shortly after retiring, Jesup built large houses in two summer resorts favored by America's wealthy. One was a residence in Lenox, Massachusetts, "Belvoir Terrace." In Bar Harbor he occupied a Shingle Style house on Kebo Street, "Stone Cliffe," and for many years enjoyed the restful quiet of the town. His biographer, William Adams Brown, recalled that Jesup "entered heartily into the life of Bar Harbor,"³ including the Village Improvement Society.

A library had first been established in Bar Harbor in 1875, and since 1890 it had occupied increasingly crowded quarters on Ledge-lawn Avenue. Several events provided the catalyst for a new library. George B. Dorr (1853-1944) of Boston wished to present a collection of books to the Bar Harbor Horticultural Society. However, there was no room for his donation, and he determined that a new library was necessary. In the spring of 1909, he approached Philip Livingston to suggest that he give a site for such a building in memory of his recently deceased wife. But Dorr discovered that Livingston had already made arrangements to erect a fountain in her memory on the village green.

Occupied with many other projects, not until the end of the summer did Dorr once again give thought to securing funds for a library site. This time he approached Mrs. Maria Van Antwerp DeWitt Jesup (1834-1914) to suggest that she donate funds to buy the land. Her husband, whom she had married in

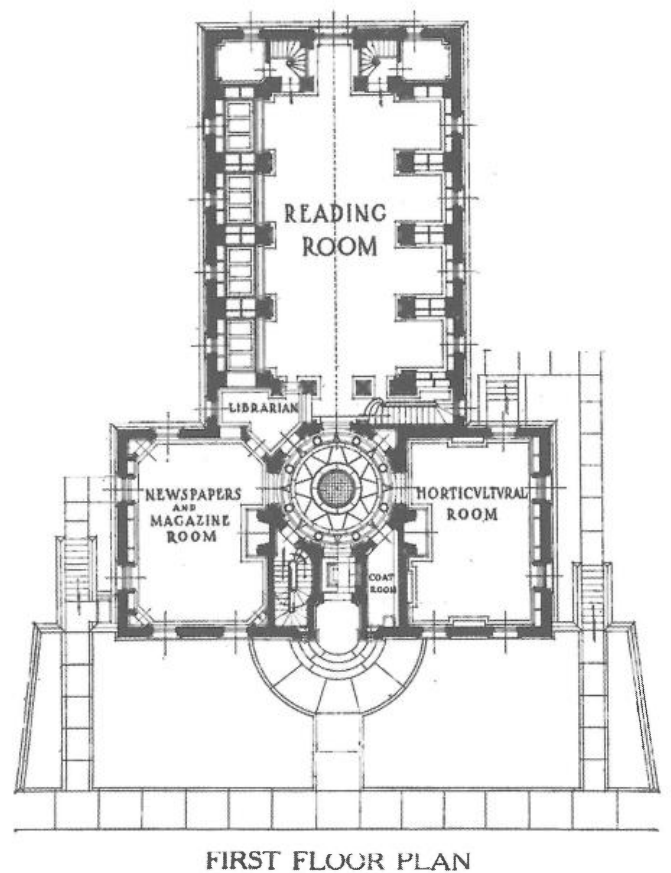


Figure 3. Plan of the first floor of the Jesup Memorial Library, Bar Harbor, 1910 (MHPC).

1854, had died in late January, 1908, and she had inherited a considerable fortune which she used to continue his many philanthropies.

Although William Adams Brown, a cousin of Delano, noted that Jesup "was not a great reader,"⁴ Dorr may well have been aware that in 1905 he had provided funds for a library for the town of his birth, Westport, Connecticut. Dorr thus had strong reason to hope his widow might do the same for the town where

he maintained a summer residence. Dorr was correct in his assumptions, and Mrs. Jesup conceived that a library for Bar Harbor would be a suitable memorial to her husband, whose own schooling had been cut short by economic necessity.

Mrs. Jesup readily agreed to Dorr's initial proposal, and a centrally located site on Mt. Desert Street was purchased. She then surprised Dorr by offering to pay for the new building as well, donating first \$20,000, a sum which she soon increased to \$50,000. A friend from Philadelphia with whom she had discussed her plans, Mrs. John Markoe, recommended Delano to Mrs. Jesup. A building committee was organized, and its members comprised Dorr and Ernesto G. Fabbri (died 1943) and Henry Lane Eno (1871-1928), both of New York.

Dorr and Mrs. Jesup met in Delano's office in the fall of 1909, and after further conferring with her, Delano drew up preliminary studies and plans in March, 1910. When it became clear that the library would cost much more than initially estimated, Mrs. Jesup generously added another \$20,000 to the \$50,000 she had already promised. The town of Bar Harbor agreed to pay the salary of a librarian and to provide funds for the purchase of books. Mrs. Jesup also established an endowment of \$50,000, the interest from which would underwrite the costs of maintenance, heat, light, insurance, and a janitor.

When construction began that summer, a writer for the *Bar Harbor Record* predicted: "The building, when completed, will be one of the finest libraries in any town or city in New England of this size."⁵ The edifice fully realized these proud hopes. Delano designed a dignified five-bay brick Georgian Revival library set on a granite basement and topped by a hipped roof pierced by two chimneys.⁶ A handsome Palladian entrance in the center of the facade was flanked by a pair of classically-detailed round-arched windows on either side. Appropriately, an open book is featured in a medallion over the front door.

A T-shaped plan efficiently provided for all necessary functions (Figures 2, 3). Patrons entered through a central rotunda into a spacious reading room panelled in dark oak with a long table installed in the center. Stacks were open, and windowed alcoves on three sides contained additional tables and chairs. Galleries above featured more shelves and were accessible by stairs at either end of the room. The floor was covered in cork, insuring that a quiet atmosphere would be maintained. Lighting fixtures were hung from the vaulted cove ceiling. An office for the librarian was conveniently situated just off the main reading room.

Two rooms on the main floor flanked the entryway. One was to house the Bar Harbor Horticultural Society's collection of books and plant and landscape photographs. Panelled and fitted with a fireplace, it

overlooked the library's garden. The other served as a children's reading room. In the basement were two rooms for meetings and for newspapers and magazines as well as additional stack space. As the library would be open year round, a boiler room provided heat during the cold months. Mount Desert Nursery supervised the planting of a herbaceous garden adjacent to the basement level. Sheltered, yet exposed to plentiful sun, it provided a pleasant green prospect for much of the year.

The Directors aimed to serve the needs of two constituencies - permanent residents of Bar Harbor and the summer visitors who had made the new building possible. The broad purpose was to inspire and educate its varied patrons: "To make it serve as an awakening suggestion of the higher life of thought and feeling into which the world's great literature, both old and new, is, next to inspiring human contact, the torch-bearer and single guide."⁷

The Jesup Memorial Library was dedicated on August 30, 1911. Among the speakers were two long-time summer residents, the noted Philadelphia physician S. Weir Mitchell and the Right Reverend William Lawrence, Bishop of Massachusetts. In the prayer he offered on this occasion, Lawrence expressed his conviction that "wisdom and hope, cheer and charity, justice and truth"⁸ would inspire the patrons of a structure representative of "a finer spirit of public service."⁹ The Honorable Luere B. Deasy, chairman of the library's trustees and later Chief Justice of the Maine Supreme Court, gratefully accepted the new structure on behalf of the citizens of Bar Harbor, declaring, "The gift of a library is the best and most perfect public gift."¹⁰ George Dorr was enthusiastic about the new structure he had worked so hard to realize: "No more delightful place for reading or for quiet study exists in America today."¹¹

A dozen years passed before Delano and Aldrich received their second Maine commission, and again this was Delano's responsibility. Architects during this period did a substantial business in alterations and additions to extant structures, and in 1923 he was commissioned to design an addition to a summer cottage owned by the Chanlers (Figure 4). The Chanlers were good friends of Delano, and the firm had already designed several buildings for their relatives.

Located on 700 Acre Island, adjacent to Islesboro, an island popular as a retreat for wealthy summer residents, the cottage was one of a pair on a 150 acre estate which had once been the Warren farm.¹² It had originally been built in 1900 for Rose Elizabeth Cleveland (1846-1918), the sister of President Grover Cleveland (1837-1908). An author, she had served as her older brother's White House hostess between 1885 and 1886 during his first administration.



Figure 4. Mrs. William Astor Chanler Cottage, 700 Acre Island, Islesboro, 1988 view (MHPC).

Both Chanlers had led unusually active lives. Beatrice Winthrop Ashley Chanler (1886-1946), a Virginia native, had pursued sculpture, was active in European war relief efforts, and was a published author. When she met her future husband, William Astor Chanler (1867-1934), whom she married in 1903, she was an actress. He was the great-grandson of John Jacob Astor, and his parents were John Winthrop Chanler and Margaret Astor Ward. His endeavors included explorations in Africa, service in the Spanish American War, and a term as a Congressman.

The Chanlers and Cleveland were good friends, and they spent the summer of 1911 on her estate. They liked it so well that in 1919, the year after their hostess's death, they purchased the beach cottage from her heirs. Mrs. Chanler, drawing on her earlier theatrical career, chose a name inspired by Shakespeare's romantic comedy *The Tempest* for her new summer residence, "Yellow Sands." Appropriately set on an island, the source was the spirit Ariel's song from Act I, Scene ii:

Come unto these yellow sands,
And then take hands.
Curtsied when you have and kissed
the wild waves whist,
Foot it feately here and there,
And, sweet sprites, the burden bear.

In 1923 the Chanlers decided they needed more space, and Beatrice invited Delano to pay a visit to

Maine. In between sessions of sailing and watercolor sketching, he considered ideas for a new wing, and plans were ready by the spring of 1924. His design was inspired by regional tradition, as the patron's son recalled: "On the exterior the addition resembled a typical four-room cottage of the Maine coast."¹³ The Colonial Revival emphasis of the Cape addition with its tall shuttered windows trimmed in white made a nice visual counterpoint to the earlier Shingle Style cottage. But its large single room, with yellow walls, had an elegant simplicity and served the family well for many subsequent summers. An Italian craftsman friend, aided by a carpenter and mason from Islesboro, were able to complete the job in six weeks.

The house long remained in family hands, and Mrs. Chanler summered there for more than a quarter of a century. After her husband's death in Paris in 1934, she continued her annual visits to Maine until she was stricken enroute to her summer residence on the New York-Portland train on June 19, 1946.

If Delano was largely responsible for the Jesup Memorial Library and the Chanler addition, a summer house on the island of North Haven was entirely the work of Aldrich (Figures 5, 6). Connected by steamer to the mainland, North Haven was located about a dozen miles east of Rockland. Its seasonal community established in the late nineteenth century blended social exclusivity with geographical accessibility for the many prominent families who summered there.¹⁴



Figure 5. Dwight Morrow House, North Haven, circa 1935 (Courtesy of North Haven Historical Society).

Aldrich's patron was an old friend, Dwight Whitney Morrow (1873-1931). At the time of the commission, Morrow was a respected member of the elite banking firm of J. P. Morgan and Company, where he had worked since 1914. A graduate of Amherst College in 1895, he studied law at Columbia, becoming a specialist in corporate legal matters, a field in which he advanced quickly. His wife was Elizabeth Reeve Cutter Morrow (1873-1953), whom he had met while she was a student at Smith College.

In 1903, the year they were married, the Morrows settled in suburban Englewood, New Jersey. Their neighbors included future Morgan partner Thomas William Lamont (1870-1948) and his wife Florence Haskell Corliss Lamont (1872-1952), also a Smith graduate. Smith College alumnae and Morgan firm connections strongly influenced their ties to the island.

The Morrows had first visited North Haven in June, 1919, as guests of the Lamonts, whose house on Pulpit Harbor, "Sky Farm," had recently been completed. When the Morrows returned the following year, they were once again impressed, as Mrs. Morrow recorded in her diary: "It is more delightful than I remember it, the most perfect summer home I know, a simple farmhouse transformed in comfort."¹⁵ Several subsequent summer sojourns were spent with another pair of Pulpit Harbor residents, Charles Dyer Norton and his wife Katherine McKim Garrison Norton (1875-1948), yet another graduate of Smith.¹⁶ For other visits, they rented cottages in the village. Their many personal connections and warm memories made them finally decide to build a house of their own on North Haven.

During the summer of 1926, Mrs. Morrow recorded in her diary: "We are looking at property every day here!"¹⁷ In July they discovered exactly what

they wanted on the western shore of the island, several miles from the Lamonts. After lunch on July 28, 1926, their friends the Cabots took the Morrows next door to see the farm of Hubert O. Grant. Although they had seen part of the site before, they had never ventured out on the point on Bartlett's Harbor. When they did, they were immediately impressed with its openness and beauty: "The point is so well cleared, close cropped by sheep, that it looks as if it were just waiting for someone to build on it."¹⁸ On August 5th the Lamonts inquired on their behalf as to the price. The next day, upon learning that John Edward Zimmermann of Philadelphia was also considering purchasing the property, Elizabeth Morrow took decisive action: "I went immediately to Mr. Grant's and said I would buy the place."¹⁹

Hubert Grant agreed to sell, and Mrs. Morrow was thrilled: "We have bought the Grant farm - 83 acres and a heavenly view!"²⁰ The Morrows decided to name their property "Deacon Brown's Point" after the original owner of the site. One of Mrs. Morrow's oldest friends was Smith classmate Amey Owen Aldrich (1873-1963), and she soon contacted her architect brother Chester. Her husband's busy schedule left Mrs. Morrow very much in charge of the project, and the next two years were ones of intense designing. At the time the Morrows acquired their Maine property, they were involved in building a formal Georgian Revival house in Englewood, "Next Day Hill," also designed by Aldrich. Once construction in New Jersey was well under way by the late spring of 1927, Aldrich and Mrs. Morrow turned their attention to the summer cottage.

In March, 1927, Mrs. Morrow and Aldrich made a pre-season visit to North Haven, and they "tramped

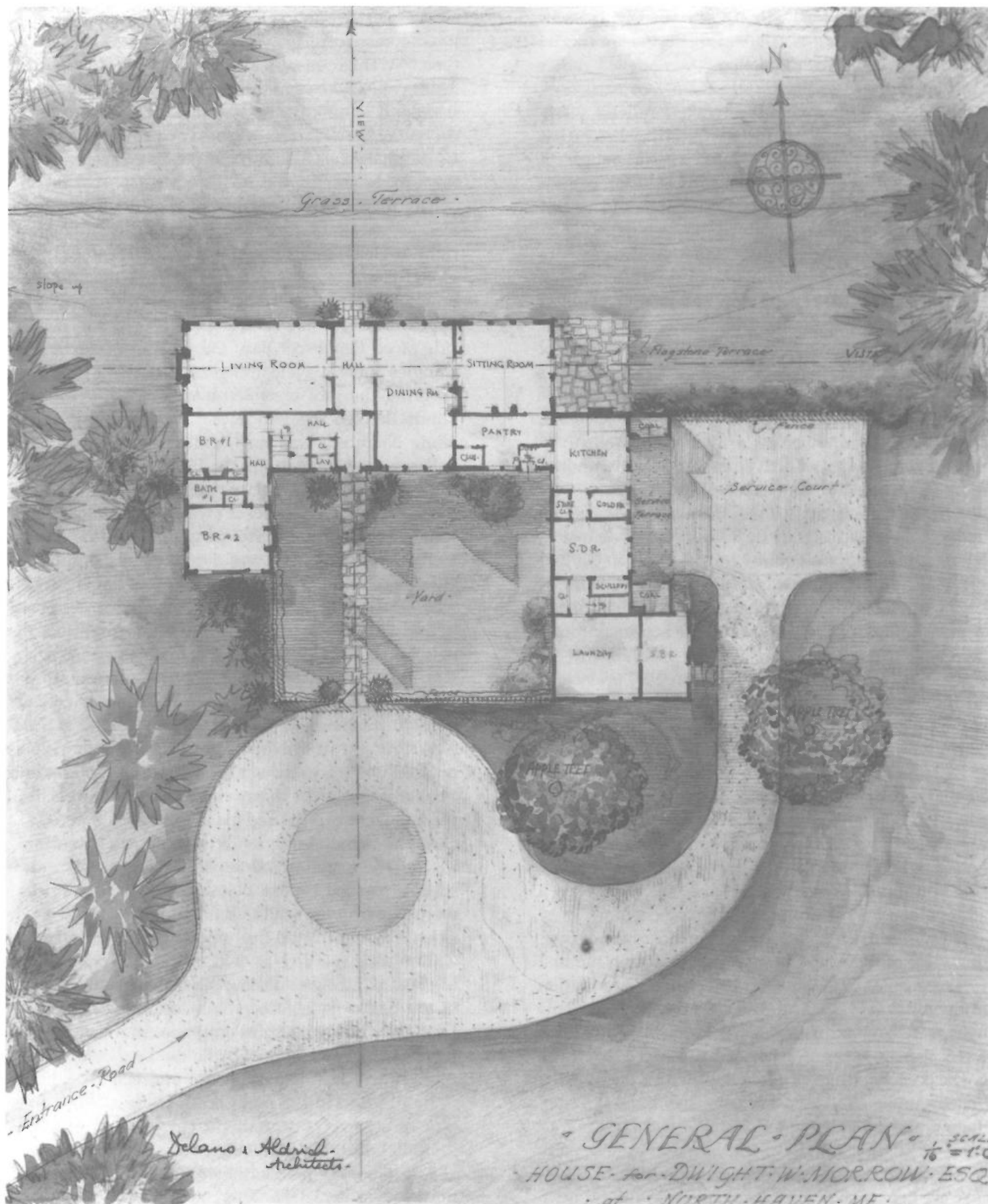


Figure 6. "General Plan. House for Dwight Morrow, Esq. North Haven, Me.," Delano & Aldrich, architects, 1928 (Delano & Aldrich Collection, Division of Drawings and Archives, Avery Architectural and Fine Arts Library, Columbia University in the City of New York).

- Presbyterian Church in New York in whose rectory Delano was born. In 1929 he officiated at the Lindberg wedding. Brown's Seal Harbor summer house was designed by Bar Harbor architect Fred L. Savage.
5. "Jesup Memorial Library," *Bar Harbor Record*, July 6, 1910. Chester A. Hodgkins of Bar Harbor was the builder, and Milton W. Stratton served as local superintendent of Delano's plans.
 6. The granite for the basement and the steps came from the Bear Brook quarry at the base of Newport Mountain.
 7. George B. Dorr, *The Jesup Memorial Library*, Bar Harbor, Maine, p. 5.
 8. "Presentation and Dedication of Jesup Memorial Library, Wednesday, August 30, 1911," *Bar Harbor Record*, September 6, 1911.
 9. Ibid.
 10. Ibid.
 11. Dorr, *The Jesup Memorial Library*, p. 1.
 12. Earle G. Shettleworth, Jr., *The Summer Cottages of Islesboro 1890-1930*, Islesboro, 1989, pp. 38-41.
 13. William Astor Chanler, Jr., *And did Those Feet in Ancient Time: A Seven Hundred Acre Island Reminiscence*, Rockport, 1984. The porches of the original cottage were also enclosed with glass at this time. For more on this family, see Lately Thomas, *A Pride of Lions, The Astor Orphans, the Chanler Chronicle*, New York, 1971.
 14. For more on the island's summer rusticators and architecture, see Roger G. Reed, *Summering on the Thoroughfare: The Architecture of North Haven, Maine*, Portland, 1993.
 15. ERCM Diary, June 27, 1920, ERCMP/SCA.
 16. Their daughter Lucia Garrison Norton Valentine (1902-1992), also a Smith graduate, designed a summer guest house on North Haven for the Morrors in 1928.
 17. ERCM Diary, July 24, 1926, ERCMP/SCA.
 18. ERCM Diary, July 28, 1926, ERCMP/SCA.
 19. ERCM Diary, August 6, 1926, ERCMP/SCA. Zimmermann subsequently purchased another property on the island and commissioned a house by Philadelphia architect Edmund B. Gilchrist.
 20. Ibid.
 21. ERCM Diary, March 22, 1927, ERCMP/SCA.
 22. Ibid.
 23. ERCM Diary, March 27, 1927, ERCMP/SCA.
 24. ERCM to Amey Aldrich, July 11, 1927, ERCMP/SCA.
 25. ERCM Diary, September 3, 1927, ERCMP/SCA.
 26. ERCM Diary, July 21, 1927, ERCMP/SCA.
 27. Ibid.
 28. ERCM Diary, July 26, 1927, ERCMP/SCA.
 29. "North Haven," *Rockland Courier-Gazette*, February 25, 1928.
 30. Letter, AML to ERCM, February, 1928, in AML, *Bring Me a Unicorn, Diaries and Letters, 1922-1928*, New York, 1971, p. 119.
 31. ERCM Diary, June 13, 1928, ERCMP/SCA.
 32. Ibid.
 33. ERCM to Amey Aldrich, June 26, 1928, ERCMP/SCA.
 34. "U.S. Ambassador to Mexico Chooses North Haven, Maine, for Summer House," *Lewiston Journal*, August 4, 1928.
 35. "Lindbergh will wed Anne Morrow at Summer Home of Her Family on Maine Island this June, is Report," *The World*, March 28, 1929. Although the Rockland papers had predicted for several months that the wedding of Charles Lindbergh (1902-1974) and Anne Spencer Morrow (born 1906) would take place on North Haven, the couple was married on May 27, 1929, at the family's house in Englewood. In 1931 Aldrich designed a house for them in Hopewell, New Jersey.
 36. "U.S. Ambassador to Mexico Chooses North Haven, Maine, for Summer House," *Lewiston Journal*, August 4, 1928.
 37. "The Morrow Summer Home," *Rockland Courier-Gazette*, May 7, 1929.
 38. Ibid.
 39. AML Diary, June 22, 1928, North Haven, in *Bring Me a Unicorn*, p. 174.
 40. ERCM Diary, July 11, 1926, ERCMP/SCA.
 41. AML Diary, April 5, 1938, in *The Flower and the Nettle, Diaries and Letters, 1936-1939*, New York, 1976, p.205.
 42. AML, *North to the Orient*, New York, 1935, p. 46.
 43. Ibid.
 44. Ibid., p. 47.
 45. Letter, AML to Elisabeth Reeve Morrow Morgan, July 11, 1934, in AML, *Locked Rooms and Open Doors, Diaries and Letters, 1933-1935*, New York, 1974, p. 193.
 46. ERCM to Amey Aldrich, July 21, 1940, ERCMP/SCA.

ARCHITECTURAL DRAWINGS

The Jesup Library owns a watercolor rendering of the front elevation and a portfolio of construction drawings. Two drawings for the library and forty-three sheets relating to the Morrow House are in the collection of the Avery Architectural Library at Columbia University in New York.

LIST OF KNOWN COMMISSIONS IN MAINE BY DELANO AND ALDRICH

Jesup Memorial Library, Bar Harbor, 1910-11, Extant
 Mrs. William Astor Chanler Cottage, Islesboro, Addition, 1923-24, Extant
 Dwight Morrow House, North Haven, 1927-28, Extant

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

For their help in my research, the author wishes to thank Richard Guy Wilson of the University of Virginia and Maida Goodwin of the Smith College Archives.

Volume 7, 1995

Published by Maine Citizens for Historic Preservation
 Earle G. Shettleworth, Jr., Editor
 Roger G. Reed, Associate Editor